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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
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O 252112Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0206

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 3053

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM PINS AR
SUBJECT: ARREST AND RELEASE OF BUENOS AIRES HERALD EDITOR ROBERT COX
REF: TELCONS APR 22 AND 24, EMBASSY TO ARA/ECA RONDON

1. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY FOR RECORD OF EVENTS OVER WEEKEND OF APR 22-24; BUENOS AIRES HERALD EDITOR COX (BRITISH SUBJECT RESIDENT IN ARGENTINA) WAS ARRESTED IN HIS OFFICES AT 1730 HOURS APR 22 BY TWO POLICE DETECTIVES, WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES PROPERLY AND ASKED HIM TO ACCOMPANY THEM TO FEDERAL POLICE CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS. HERALD STAFF IMMEDIATELY NOTIFIED WIRE SERVICES AND MANY OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

2. AMBASSADOR IMMEDIATELY ATTEMPTED TO REACH COX FAMILY BY PHONE TO EXPRESS INTEREST AND CONCERN, BUT UNABLE ESTABLISH CONTACT (LATER LEARNED THAT FAMILY HAD DISCONNECTED PHONE TEMPORARILY).

ACTING ON AMBASSADOR'S INSTRUCTIONS, EMBOFF CONTINUED EFFORT AND REACHED COX FAMILY ABOUT 2100 HOURS. BRITISH CONSUL GENERAL AND HEAD OF CHANCERY WENT TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS AT 2230 BUT WERE REFUSED ACCESS TO COX. AT ABOUT 0100 HOURS APR 23 THEY WERE CALLED BACK AND FOUND ATMOSPHERE MUCH CHANGED. THEY SPOKE WITH FEDERAL JUDGE EDUARDO MARQUARDT WHO WAS AT HEADQUARTERS

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UNCLASSIFIED

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny
Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full
☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to _____
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

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AND LEARNED THAT COX CHARGED UNDER LAW 21322 FOR PREMATURE PUBLICATION (APR 20) OF STORY OF ROME PRESS CONFERENCE OF "PERONIST MONTONERO PARTY" WHICH GOA DID NOT APPROVE FOR RELEASE UNTIL APR 21. BRITISH OFFICIALS WERE AGAIN DENIED ACCESS TO COX ON GROUNDS OF ARGENTINE LAW CONCERNING STATUS OF INCOMMUNICATION, BUT WERE ALLOWED TO PASS MEDICINES (ASTHMA) ON TO COX.

3. BRITISH EFFORTS CONTINUED THROUGH APR 21 AND AFTER FURTHER APPEARANCE BEFORE JUDGE COX WAS RELEASED ON OWN RECOGNIZANCE PEDNING FURTHER JUDICIAL ACTION AT ABOUT 1800 HOURS APR 23. EMBOFF SPOKE WITH HIM LATER SAME EVENING; COX SAID HE HAD BEEN WELL TREATED. HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR AMBASSADOR'S INTEREST AND CALLED AMBASSADOR DIRECTLY TO THANK HIM.

4. COX WROTE OWN BYLINE ACCOUNT OF ARREST AS FEATURE HEADLINE IN HERALD APR 24, CONFIRMING THAT CHARGE WAS UNDER LAW PROPIBITING PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION CONCERNING SUBERSION WITHOUT PRIOR GOA RELEASE. HE EMPHASIZED SEVERAL TIMES THE FACT OF CORRECT AND EVEN KIND TREATMENT GIVEN HIM BY POLICE. HERALD ON SAME DAY PRINTED EDITORIAL PREPARED BEFORE COX'S RELEASE ENTITLED "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS" IN WHICH IT DEPLORED DAMAGE DONE TO ARGENTINE IMAGE ABROAD BY SUCH ACTIONS, CITING US CONGRESSMAN DRINAN'S STATEMENT THAT ARRESTS OF TIMERMAN AND JARA (WHO WAS RELEASED WITHOUT CHARGE ON APR 23), AND DISAPPEARANCES OF RAAB AND SAJON, INDICATED GOA CAMPAIGN TO SILENCE FEW INDEPENDENT JOURNALISTS LEFT IN ARGENTINA. REST OF PRESS AND MEDIA REPORTED THE ARREST BUT REFRAINED FROM EDITORIALIZING

5. COX AND HIS PUBLISHER, US CIT ROBERT MANIGUALT, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR APRIL 25 FOR EXTENDED CONVERSATION, WHICH WILL BE REPORTED IN SEPTEL.

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